Met Office

NEWS

Met Office Weather Warnings: What is changing?

Author: Press Office
10:40 (UTC+1) on Fri 22 Jun 2018

We're introducing two new national weather warnings, thunderstorms and lightning.

These new warnings are part of a number of changes to the Met Office National Severe Weather Warnings Service (NSWWS).

The aim of Met Office weather warnings is to inform the public and emergency services of the potential impacts of severe or hazardous weather. They are given a colour (yellow, amber or red) depending on a combination of both the impact the weather may have and the likelihood of those impacts occurring. Whatever the colour people may need to take action to protect themselves, their property or business.

Other changes include issuing warnings up to seven days ahead of impact, as opposed to the current five days, and making the warnings easier to understand. These changes have been made following feedback from the public and emergency responders.

Mel Harrowsmith, Met Office Head of Civil Contingencies said: "One of our key priorities is to continuously evolve and improve the quality and delivery of Met Office weather warnings, as they are essential for protecting life and property in the UK. Many of you will have already seen some of the changes to the look and feel of warnings on our website and app, reflecting the findings from our user research and these new warnings should help people plan for the impacts of torrential summer downpours and lightning strikes."

New warning types

Thunderstorm warnings **–** as you will have seen in recent weeks we issued rain warnings to cover impacts of heavy downpours often associated with thunderstorms. However, research found that many people felt there was a significant difference between the impacts of heavy rain in winter and those from thunderstorms. Therefore, we are introducing thunderstorm warnings to help communicate the potential impacts from this sort of weather, particularly through the summer months

Lightning warnings **–** introduced to allow for those occasions where the main impact will be from lightning strikes or to enable dual warnings of snow and lightning to be issued.

The full list of warnings are now **rain**, **thunderstorms**, **wind**, **snow**, **lightning**, **ice** and **fog**. We can also now issue dual warnings, such as rain and wind, if the impacts are likely to be from two weather types.

Improvements have also been made to the way people can access, understand and use warning information. These improvements include:

- extending how far before severe weather warnings can be issued: from five days to seven days ahead
- improving the language used to communicate severe weather and impacts, including advice as to what to expect and what action to take
- issuing warnings faster and, therefore, with shorter lead times when the weather is changing rapidly
- improving the look and feel across all Met Office digital channels, our website and app

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